sible and perhaps dangerous venture, he explained. Our contact man—a very small fellow, soft-spoken and beaming—met us at a municipal power station. He explained that the meeting was just beginning and that only the most progressively minded members of the police force would be there, not more than fifty in all. Then he led us to a wine cellar.

"Where are the police?" he asked the barman. The latter pointed across the street. We entered a suspicious-looking place, a combination of a tavern, rooming house, and I do not know what else. It seemed deserted. A waiter—or perhaps a bouncer—led us through endless shabby corridors and stairways. At last he stopped at a door and whispered, "This is the place!"

We entered a large room with a double bed and a long table covered with a white cloth. Around the table sat a score of men in police uniform, all with side arms, all with tense, immobile faces. Our guide introduced us: the comrades from the St. Petersburg Committee of the S-D party, Bolshevist faction.

The man at the head of the table said, "Take off your coats, gentlemen, and be seated."

After a minute of silence, a heavy police officer with a red face said to us, "Excuse us, gentlemen-strangers. My name is Safronov, senior inspector, Kolomna second precinct. Will you kindly give us your names and addresses?"

The man at the head of the table seemed annoyed. "This is sheer nonsense," he remarked. "We are not interested in the names of our guests." But Nikolai and I wrote our names and addresses on the back of a wine card and passed it around. The faces became more friendly, but the conversation dragged until Safronov said resolutely, "A business of such importance must begin with a drink!"

The suggestion was approved enthusiastically. A waiter was summoned, and Safronov again became the spokesman of the group. "Serve the best you have!" he ordered. "Tell the bar it is for the police! They will know!"

Four huge trays appeared on the table, one with bottles, another with glasses and plates, and two with platters of snacks. The meeting warmed up. The police officers proved worthy of their reputation as drinkers. Nikolai was second to none. My teetotalism was not noticed. When the animation reached its peak, the man at the head of the table, who drank with the others but remained perfectly sober, said, "This is enough. Now let us start. Report, please, Lissevich!"

A middle-aged officer with a narrow horse face adorned by a reddish mustache cleared his throat and began. The main complaint of the police officers, he said, was their low salaries, incompatible with